

USE OF INTERNET AND SOCIAL NETWORKS AND OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

General Guidelines

Consult Tulsa Public School's board policy on internet safety and appropriate use, as well as the employee manual and/or parent and student handbook. Be aware that all existing policies and behavior guidelines extend to school-related activities in the online environment as well as on school premises.

TPS recognizes the prevalence of social media used for personal and educational purposes and acknowledges that its employees have the right under the First Amendment to speak out on matters of public concern. However, TPS also has the right to regulate the speech of employees in certain circumstances. Accordingly, it is essential that employees conduct themselves in such a way that their personal or educational use of social media does not adversely affect their position with TPS. Social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, personal web pages or blogs, educational networking sites and electronic messaging.

Use good judgment. Think about the type of image you want to convey on behalf of TPS when posting to social networks and social media sites. Remember that what you post will be viewed and permanently archived. Social media websites and blogs are not private. Internet search engines can find information years after it was originally posted. Comments can be forwarded or copied, and archival systems save information even if a post is deleted.

Remember professional communications are available to TPS administrators. TPS considers an employee's use of any electronic media for the purpose of communicating with a student or a parent to be an extension of the employee's workplace responsibilities. Accordingly, the board expects TPS employees to use professional judgment and appropriate decorum when using any social media in this fashion. TPS administrators may require an employee to provide access to any websites used by him or her for communication with students or parents and to produce copies of any electronic communication with students or parents, including text messages, web page posts, etc. This policy does not authorize an administrator to inspect an employee's personal equipment without the employee's express consent.

Social Networking Websites

Many social networking websites are not accessible on TPS network because they have been blocked. If TPS employees, including teachers, would like to request that a website be made accessible to use for teaching and learning, that person shall submit a written request to the IT Director for review, identifying the online tools to be used and the instructional purpose in using them.

While on TPS property, neither TPS employees nor students may use an outside, proprietary network to access websites that are blocked on TPS network.

All TPS employees shall abide by the following requirements regarding use of social networking websites, even when done in their personal time, using personal property.

1. Fraternization with students using social networking websites on the internet:
 - a. TPS employees may not list students as “friends” on networking sites unless the student’s parent (if the student is under 18) or the student (if the student is 18 or over) has provided the student’s building administrator with written permission to do so;
 - b. All e-contacts with students shall be made through TPS computer/email and telephone system;
 - c. All e-contact by sponsors with student organization members shall be sent to all team members;
 - d. Inappropriate contact with students or parents via e-mail, phone, or other devices is prohibited.
2. TPS employees may not post items on social networking websites with sexual content if they are identifying themselves as an employee of TPS;
3. TPS employees may not post items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs or alcohol if they are identifying themselves as an employee of TPS;
4. TPS employees may not post pictures, video, or audio of students unless the student’s parent (if the student is under 18) or the student (if the student is 18 or over) has provided the student’s building administrator with written permission to do so.
5. TPS employees may not use a social networking site to discuss students or TPS employees. Employees may not submit or post confidential or protected information about TPS, its students, alumni or employees.

Note that when using a TPS e-mail address and/or equipment to participate in any social media or professional social networking activity, the communications are public, and employees are responsible for the content in the communication. TPS employees are urged to carefully consider whether a particular posting puts their professional reputation and effectiveness as a TPS employee at risk.

TPS employees should be aware that people classified as “friends” on social networking sites have the ability to download and share the employee’s information and photographs with others. TPS employees are strongly encouraged to set and maintain social networking privacy settings at the most restrictive level.

Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines

TPS employees and students must respect copyright and fair use guidelines when posting material on social network sites, even those websites used and accessed for educational and classroom purposes. See www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html.

Hyperlinking to outside sources is recommended. Do not plagiarize. Give credit, where credit is due, to the sources of material. When hyperlinking to other sites and media, be sure that the hyperlinked content is appropriate and consistent with these guidelines. Be aware that photographs taken by professional photographers cannot be scanned and used on the internet without the photographer's permission, even if they are photos purchased from the photographer.

Text and Instant Messaging

TPS employees shall not text or instant message any student individually. All text and instant messages to students shall be sent to the school, class, team, club or organization. Employees shall not send messages that are personal in nature and not related to the business of TPS or that contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information. TPS employees are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Use of Social Media

The Superintendent shall designate those staff persons who have management or administrator access to TPS social media, including, but not limited to the ability to remove content from TPS social media if determined to be inappropriate. Only content that is allowable on the TPS website is allowable on TPS social media pages unless otherwise authorized by the Superintendent.

Penalties

Both TPS employees and students face the possibility of penalties, including student suspension and employee termination, for failing to abide by TPS policies when accessing and using social media.